

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-11. (canceled)

12. (previously presented) A media gateway of a packet-based communication network, comprising:

a data channel controller which controls a data channel of a first communication connection;

a terminator that terminates a signaling message of a second communication connection; and

a connection controller that performs a first part of a connection control function for a third communication connection and authorizes a central network controller to carry out a second part of the connection control function.

13. (previously presented) The media gateway according to claim 12, wherein the connection controller performs connection control functions which do not need to be carried out centrally within the network.

14. (previously presented) The media gateway according to claim 13, wherein the connection controller performs connection control functions which are time-critical.

15. (currently amended) The media gateway according to claim 13, wherein the connection controller performs all connection control functions which do not need to be carried out centrally within the network.

16. (previously presented) The media gateway according to claims 12, wherein a set of

subscriber data is managed.

17. (previously presented) The media gateway according to claims 16, wherein the set of subscriber data is stored.

18. (previously presented) A media gateway according to claim 12, wherein a set of charge data for a communication connection is recorded.

19. (previously presented) A media gateway according to claim 12, wherein an access control protocol is used for communicating with the central network controller.

20. (previously presented) A media gateway according to claim 12, wherein a SIP protocol is used for communicating with the central network controller.

21. (previously presented) A media gateway according to claim 12, wherein a connection control message intended for a second media gateway is sent to the second media gateway via the central network controller.

22. (canceled)

23. (currently amended) A method for handling a communication connection in a packet-based network, comprising:

receiving an incoming signaling message from a circuit selected from the group consisting of subscriber circuit, connection circuit, and combinations thereof;

evaluating the incoming signaling;

terminating the incoming signaling message at a media gateway and performing a first part of a connection control by at the media gateway; and

authorizing by the media gateway a central network controller to perform a second part of a connection control.

24. (previously presented) The method according to claim 23, wherein the circuit is not using a SS7 signaling protocol.

25. (currently amended) The method according to claim 23, wherein the circuit is using a SS7 signaling protocol, a user part in the SS7 signaling protocol is received and evaluated by athe media gateway after lower protocol layers have been processed by a central network controller which includes a centralized signaling gateway function.